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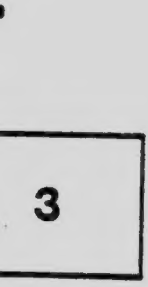

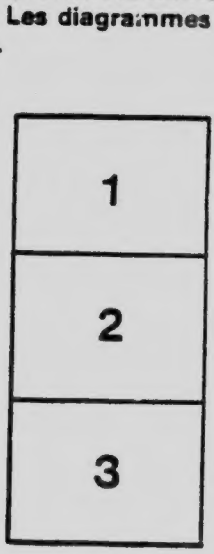

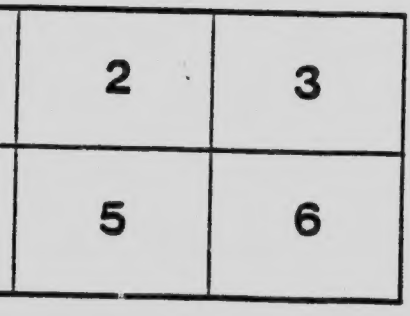

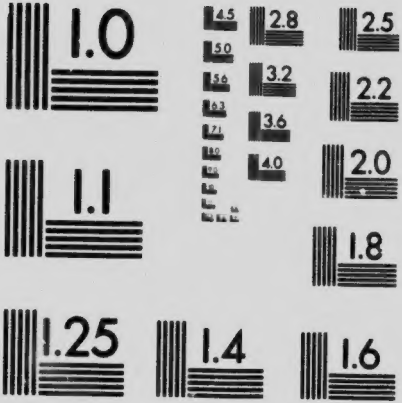

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CANADA AMONG THE NATIONS

By J. A. MACDONALD

Editor of "The Globe"

From "The Canadian Courier," January 25th, 1913

Canada Among the Nations

A Dream of Confederation Which Came True—and the Results

By J A. Macdonald, Editor of The Globe, Toronto.

It is the first business of Canadians to think about Canada. It is the mark of a good Canadian that he takes the Canadian point of view, sees with Canadian eyes, cherishes Canadian ideals, and helps to make Canadian dreams come true. If Canadian problems are not solved by the intelligent and thoughtful judgment of the people of Canada they will remain unsolved, or their solution will not make for the welfare of Canadians or for the prestige of Canada among the nations.

It is the first duty of the people of Britain to set themselves to solve the British problems. That is their business, not ours. So, too, with Australia, and New Zealand, and South Africa, and every other self-governing part of the Empire. We have all been charged to "think Imperially." A few years ago "thinking Imperially" was the mark of a progressive mind, as thinking about the "over soul" was in the previous generation, and thinking about the "referendum and recall" is to-day. But Imperial thinking is a very vague and vagrant exercise for those who have never thought clearly and to definite purpose on national affairs and on local problems. If the strength of the wolf is the pack, the real strength of the pack is also the wolf. Empire is a reality, strong and enduring, only in so far as the component parts of what is called Empire are free to develop each in its own way and to its own ideal of citizenship and service. It is for this reason I start out with the affirmation that the first duty of Canadians is to think about Canada.

WHAT CANADA HAS DONE.

Canada has already done something in world politics which gives her a place among the nations. We are sometimes told that Canada has nothing to her credit. We are assured that whatever Canada has she owes to Britain. Canada has no army and her militia is only sufficient for her own needs, and for a navy we have only a debate in Parliament. Because of all this we are admonished to be humble and not to think of Canada more highly than we ought to think.

My answer to all that lofty talk is this: The facts of history make it plain that were it not for Canadians there would be no Canada, and were it not for Canada there could have been no British Empire.

What is Canada? It is a confederation of all the Provinces of British North America into one national unit, governing itself in all Canadian matters, controlling its own revenues, choosing its own national policies, and yet an integral part of the British Empire and loyal to the person and throne of the British sovereign. And every one of those elements in Canada's status as a self-governing Dominion within the Empire is the result of Canadian choice, of Canadian statesmanship and of Canada's deliberate action.

Let no Canadian be ignorant or forgetful of the fact that if the old colonial subjection has been changed into the national self-government of to-day, that achievement was the work of a past generation of Canadians. And in that achievement, in their effort to establish free national institutions without breaking the ties of tradition and affection and historical relation that bound Canada to the mother country, those first Canadian nationalists had no precedent. The thing they undertook to do had never before been done in the world's history. No colony of any Empire, ancient or modern, had ever achieved full self-government except by cutting the painter and striking for independence. The American Colonies in the 18th century were the next-door example for the Canadian Provinces in the 19th century. The American illustration meant self government but not Empire. Canada dreamed of both.

Those Canadian pioneers had no precedents. They were pathfinders, the true pathfinders of Empire. William Lyon Mackenzie and Louis Papineau blazed the trail. Baldwin and Lafontaine laid deep and strong the foundations. George Brown and John A. Macdonald reared the walls and set the copestone. And when the superstructure of the Dominion stood foursquare it was a new thing in the political architecture of the world. It embodied a new idea. And the vital power of that idea made possible the world-empire of Britain.

Let there be no mistake at this point. It is of fundamental importance. The old Roman idea of empire was disproved. Centralized authority over subject states could not endure, even with Rome, when those states were far-scattered, resource-and isolated by the sea. The case of the American colonies proved the im-ce of that "Imperium" idea in the government of men of the British breed. many's experience with her African possessions is another illustration to-day.

That very same problem faced Canada last century. Canadians demanded self-government. It had to come, either by independence or by some other unexperimented way. Even so late as the date of Confederation public opinion in Britain favoured the independence of Canada. Both Beaconsfield and Gladstone favoured it. They saw no other way by which Canada could come to exercise the required rights of self-government. They had not seen the Canadian vision. The dream had not come to them.

But to Canadians came that vision, dimly at first, fitfully, but ever beckoning, pointing the way to new outposts of civil liberty, crossing the margin beyond which old time loyalty feared to go. It was the vision of the new Canada. It was the dream of a free nation—a new free nation that should lead a procession of unborn sovereign states which one day would belt the world with the Imperial flag of Britain. Canada was first to see the gleam, and first to follow. Then out of her penal twilight Australia saw it, and New Zealand, and so under the Southern Cross there rose a new Commonwealth and a new Dominion. Less than a decade ago across the blood and fire of the veldt the vision passed, and in its light Boer and British joined hands in the new Dominion of South Africa.

Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the self-governing Colony of Newfoundland, those five overseas dominions of the King, are to the homeland of Britain like the five fingers of a great hand. They are all free; they are all vitally related; and they all close towards the palm. And on the stretched fore-finger of that great hand the name of "Canada," first and brightest jewel of them all, sparkles forever.

CANADA IN THE EMPIRE.

What is Canada's place in the Empire? That question is in the very forefront of political debate to-day, not in Canada alone but in Britain. It raises the same vexed question for all the other Dominions. It cannot be hushed or blinked or

side-stepped. It must be faced squarely, with open eyes and resolute minds. Facing that question may demand in this generation and on the great scale of Empire the same downrightness and unflinching loyalty to principle demanded by the struggle for Canada's self-government on the narrower stage of the Canadian Provinces three generations ago.

Canada's place in the Empire? Answer that question honestly and you show your hand. Either you stand on this side, for the uncompromised national independence within Imperial relations which Canada, in principle and more and more in fact, has already achieved; or you stand on that side, for the surrender of some part of Canada's autonomy, and for the return, in principle and also in fact, to something of the rejected rule of Downing Street and the Family Compact. No middle course is open.

Three-quarters of a century ago Lord Durham made his epoch-marking report. That new epoch ushered in effective Parliamentary government at once representative of Canadian opinion and responsible to the people of Canada. Through all these years of struggle and change Canada has had statesmen who knew the seasons when to take occasion by the hand and make the bounds of Canada's freedom wider yet. The widening of Canada's freedom, stage by stage, has given the lie to the doubts and fears of those who charged that liberty and self-government would destroy the loyalty of Canadians and lead to separation from Britain.

The prophets of distrust wailed at our fathers, as they wail now at us, that freedom meant independence or annexation. Two generations of Canada's growing freedom gives back their answer. A free people are never disloyal to their flag unless that flag spells servitude or is stained with dishonour. A free people—free to govern themselves even though their government be bad, free to frame their own laws even though they work injustice, free to burden themselves and to throw off their burdens, free to tax themselves into poverty, and to knock the shackles from their industry and trade, free to endure the loss of their own folly and to enjoy the fruits of their own labour—such a people, free, independent, self-governing, are never disloyal. Such freedom is Canada's to-day, and because of that freedom all Canadians are loyal to Canada and to Britain and to the great alliance of free nations owning allegiance to the King.

But such freedom is compromised in every scheme of Imperial organization which shifts from Canada the seat of Canadian authority or takes from the Government and Parliament of Canada one particle of responsibility for Canada's policy in taxation, in trade or in defence. Information? Yes. All the information that may be given. But the policy must be Canada's, made in Canada, and made, too, in the free debate of the free Parliament of Canada. Canada's fiscal policy, Canada's tariff schedules and Canada's action in peace or in war must be determined in Canada. The voice that speaks for Canada on all great matters of national moment must have Canada's authority and carry the Canadian accent. No Imperial Trade Commission, no Imperial Defence Committee and no Imperial Cabinet not responsible to the electors of Canada can command obedience from free Canadians in matters of taxation or of naval policy or of military service. With meanings which Kipling may not have dreamed:

A nation spoke to a nation,
A queen sent word to a throne;
Daughter am I in my mother's house,
But mistress in my own.

We have been told with loud and insistent emphasis that Canada's fiscal policy must not be settled at Washington. Neither must it be settled in London, or in Australia, or in New Zealand, or in South Africa, or in Newfoundland. If a reciprocal trade agreement with the United States involved compromise and might mean conflict, much more would an Imperial trade agreement, covering all the antagonistic trade interests of all the countries of the whole Empire, involve compromise and conflict. If Canada had accepted the trade agreement with the United States, the very terms of that agreement left Canada free to change it or to abandon it altogether at any time and without notice. To the foreigner we owe nothing beyond the terms of the agreement; in an Imperial pact it would not be so. The fact of allegiance makes the difference.

And if Canada claims and exercises the right to open or to close the gates of her trade as best may serve Canadian interests, so too must Britain be left free, if it serves British interests, to keep untaxed the food of her people and to hold open her markets for the commerce of the world. In my judgment no deeper insult could be offered to the people of Canada than to suggest or to suspect that Canada's place in the Empire could ever be secured or made more honourable by taxing the food or the trade of the people of Britain. Canada does not need a preference for her wheat. To ask for it as the price of allegiance would be to betray Canada's honour. To be asked for it would be to insult Canada's intelligence.

In matters of defence Canada must maintain the same self-government she exercises in matters of trade. It is quite true that when Britain is at war Canada is not a neutral nation. Imperial relations make neutrality impossible. But Canada has the right to remain a non-combatant nation even as a citizen has the right to remain non-combatant though his country be at war. Canada was not neutral when the Boers and British declared war in South Africa, but Canada was non-combatant until by the decision of the Canadian Government she took active part. It is of the very essence of national autonomy that Canada should retain control over both the land forces and the sea forces composed of Canadians and *maintained* by the taxation of the people of Canada.

You tell me that the Foreign Office of Britain ought to know beforehand that the Admiralty or the War Office could "command" the forces of Canada in the event of diplomacy leading to war. I answer you that the Foreign Office ought to make its diplomacy so straight and so just that its course would command without question, not the war forces of Canada, but the moral judgment of Canadians and the sober and resolute support of the Minister of Militia, of the Minister of Marine and of the Government of Canada and of the Parliament to which they are responsible. What is needed in the Foreign Office and in the War Office and in the Admiralty, is not more autocratic power, but a deeper sense of public responsibility, a modernized notion of national greatness, and the twentieth century ideal of social service and social justice as applied to international relations. The wisest statesmen in Britain to-day regard it as a beneficial discipline that the few men, the statesmen, diplomats and permanent officialdom, in whose hands are the interests of peace and war for the Empire and indeed for the world, should feel themselves responsible not merely to London opinion, often shortsighted, uninformed and jingo, but also to the independent moral sense of the overseas nations of the Empire.

You will say to me again that there might be risk—"risk" is the word used—in leaving the question of Canada's part in Britain's wars to be decided by responsible Canadian authority as occasions may arise. Say that, and you say either that such war is unjust and indefensible in Canada's deliberate judgment, or that the Minister of Militia or the Minister of Marine or the Government and Parlia-

ment are not to be trusted. If you say that Canada is not to be trusted in any day of Britain's emergency, you say that the tie which binds Canada to Britain is already cut, and in so saying you slander the loyalty and the integrity of the Canadian people. President Taft once said that "the tie which binds Canada to Britain is impalpable and light as air." And so it is. That tie is impalpable as honour, light as love, but stronger than bargained bonds, more enduring than stipulated terms. It is the tie of a common life, the tie of a common love, and the indissoluble tie of an absorbing Imperial idea. By that vital tie Canada holds her place in the Empire.

CANADA IN AMERICA.

Canada's place and function on this American continent are determined by her place in the British Empire. This young nation holds this half-continent, dividing with United States the resources of America and sharing responsibility for American civilization and the duty America owes to the world. Millions of citizens have changed from one to the other making vital the ties of interest and of business which defy all boundaries and barriers. Canada did more business with the United States last year than with Britain and all the rest of the world combined. Geography and the events of history have made these two English-speaking nations the nearest neighbours with the greatest common interest and maintaining unfortified the longest common boundary of any two nations in all the world.

Let this be set down as fundamental: The political union of these two nations is not on the program. It is neither desired nor desirable on either side. Canada does not desire it, does not need it and would not approve it. The United States does not desire it, does not need it, and is better off without it. The supreme interests of each nation are better served by their separate national existence. The situation is safer and simpler for all because two flags and not one are afloat, on the Atlantic and on the Pacific, representing English-speaking civilization, ideals and power.

The best philosophy of international relations on this continent, accepted by thoughtful leaders in both countries, was expressed by Secretary of State Knox when he said:

"If there were no Canada it would be in the interest of the United States that one should be created and should be a nation in the British Empire. The power of America to-day is the power of the United States and the power of Canada plus the power of Britain. Were Canada separated from Britain, either as an independent power or as a part of the American Republic, there would be a plus."

Thoughtful people all over the United States are coming to appreciate what that "plus Britain" means. It meant much in one critical moment on Manilla Bay in 1898. To-day it means safety on the Pacific. And it may mean safety on the Atlantic if ever the authority of the Monroe Doctrine is put to the test.

But Canada on this continent does more than involve Britain in the preservation of American integrity. As a national unit in the British Empire, and as the next neighbour for 4,000 miles of the United States, Canada is the bond and the interpreter between the two great sections of the English-speaking race, holding both together in one fraternity for the highest good of each and for the best interests of all the world.

CANADA AND FRANCE.

Canada has a tie of vital interest with the Republic of France. It is not by chance, it is not for nothing, that one-third of Canadian people are of French blood, speak the French language and inherit the French traditions. It is Canada's

good fortune that her citizenship is not all of the dull and unromantic Anglo-Saxon. It makes not only for variety at home but for centres of interest and elements of prestige abroad, that so large and so important a factor in Canada's population constitutes a bond of sympathy and fraternity with the great French Republic. It is one of the distinctions of Canada's nationhood that her two best two proud races, that once fought to the knife, are now blended into one Canadian nation, both loyal to the nation's flag because under that flag life for both is just and free. And it ought to be, indeed it is, a vital factor in the cordial relations between the British Empire and the French Republic that two and a quarter millions of French citizens of Canada own loyal allegiance to the British flag. In making that fact possible and potent Canada plays a great Imperial part and promotes the peace of the world.

CANADA AND GERMANY.

Canada has relations with Germany which ought to count for the good of both countries and for the progress of civilization. Hundreds of thousands of Canadian citizens are of German ancestry, many of them German by birth and education. Canada has no better citizens, none steadier or more progressive, than those whose ancestral loyalty was to the flags of the German States, and who still love the fatherland as truly as those of British breed love the moors and glens and purple hills of their motherland.

This German element in Canada's life and industry should be a bond of sympathy and of intelligent understanding between Canadians and the people of the German Empire. At this moment no better Imperial service can be rendered by Canadians than in deliberately, definitely and with resolute persistence establishing and making strong all good relations with Germany. There has been so much wild and wicked slandering of the German Emperor, representing him as a blood-and-fire war lord, despite the fact that since the death of King Edward he has been foremost among all rulers in counselling and in keeping the peace of the world, and there has been so much malicious and dangerous inciting of anti-German feeling in Canada and much more in Britain, that Canadians as citizens of the Empire are under obligation to rebuke the slanderers and to tell the wholesome truth. It is one of the pities of our international politics that the Teuton blood—so strong in the Royal Families of both Britain and Germany, King and Kaiser being of common blood with the privilege of blood-relation frankness—it is one of the pities that this strong and wholesome Teuton blood in Germany and England, while thicker than water, is not able to silence the war-talkers and scaremongers on both sides. The Prime Minister of Canada can render no better service, either to Canada or to Britain, than by making Germany as well as France the place of friendly visitation when he moves abroad as peaceful spokesman for this Dominion.

CANADA AND THE WORLD.

Canada's blood relations with the greatest nations and races makes her place in the world unique, potential, and of commanding interest. The question is this: What will Canada do? For what will she stand? How will she behave herself when she comes to her own among the nations? Will her vote go for the disproved ideals of the world's past greatness, the international hate and strife and selfish greed that baptized the nations in blood, made history a record of international crime and prostituted diplomacy to chicanery and deceit? Or will Canada show the more excellent way?

Canada has the right to speak for peace and not for war. On this continent for a hundred years the peace has been kept, and along 4,000 miles of boundary the

sun looks down on no yawning fort or menacing battleship. With these great boundary lakes as peaceful as mill ponds, Canadians have the right to ask of their brothers of the same blood in Britain and in Germany if the North Sea, swept free of all Dreadnoughts, should not be made the sphere of Teuton fellowship, rather than a wild and angry flood bearing the fleets of Armageddon.

Canada has lived at peace and has learned the worth of justice, the power of law and the true greatness of service. She has seen all the nations of history burdened with war debts and their manhood destroyed in war's incalculable slaughter. She has reckoned the cost, not in money alone, but in heroes who fell in war and in the unborn multitudes who died in the heroic dead. That price she shrinks to pay so long as reason and law and Christian civilization show the more excellent way.

Which way will Canada take? Before her at this hour opens on the one side the broad gate and the wide way through which the nations have gone in their madness and blindness and pagan folly to their own destruction. And there opens on the other side the straight gate and the narrow way of national self-discipline and international civilization which leads to the brotherhood of men, based on law and justice and honour, and bound up in the Fatherhood of God.

Canada is now at the parting of the ways, as surely as she was in the decisive days before Confederation. The issue then was the winning for Canadians of responsible self-government. The choice was then between the only way known to history—a declaration of independence—and the new, untried way, the Canadian dream of national autonomy, retaining the historical British connection. Canada chose the new way. History has approved that choice. The British Empire as a world-alliance of free nations is history's justification of Canada's first great adventure toward nationhood.

The issue to-day is at bottom the same. The choice is between full national autonomy, in which Canada's standing in the Empire and among the nations in all matters of administration and of defence is that of a free nation, and its old alternative, the surrender of Canada's control for the sake of the revived but long discredited "jingo" ideal of Empire.

Surely Canada will not be recreant to her own past. Having blazed the way to nationality for herself and for all the other overseas dominions she will not now go back. Having won national self-government Canada will go forward in her own way until she has made her own distinctive Canadian contribution to the problem of democracy. It will be to Canada's dishonour if in the free air of this new country she does nothing original and effective to make government of the people, by the people, for the people, something better than government of the people by the privileged for the few.

More than that. By standing uncompromised in her national independence within the British Empire, Canada not only helps to change the meaning of Empire from the old and doomed notion of "Imperium" to the new and enduring idea of "Alliance," but she also suggests by the success of the great world-alliance of the British Dominions the larger organization of all civilized nations upon a self-governing peace basis. Such an alliance would put war out of the question by exposing it as the useless, burdensome and disastrous folly which history proves it to be. And this new leadership can come to Canada, as came the first Imperial leadership, not by submerging her ideal of independent national autonomy in any Imperial compromise, but by making stronger her individuality, clearer her voice and more definite and distinctive her national opinion. If the cabal of jingoism succeeds Canadians may repent too late that for less than a mess of pottage they sold their incomparable birthright as a nation, their strategic position in the Empire, and their unique place of leadership in the world.